

## Jobs Await Graduates of New Community's LPN School



New Community Corporation's School of Practical Nursing graduated a total of 64 students during the traditional pinning and capping ceremony that ushered these new professionals into a job market that for them is rather upbeat, despite the economic recession.

The ceremony was held December 3rd at St. Rose of Lima Church in Newark, where it began with a candlelight procession down the center aisle. The students, all dressed in white uniforms, also sang a song many of the graduates have actually lived as they worked to complete the rigorous 13-month program: "We've Come This Far By Faith."

"We worked very hard. Today's pay day," said Loretta Smith of Newark, a student who delivered the class address for the school's daytime division.

Ellen Boddie, school director and head instructor, said many of the students experienced hardships and even tragedies while completing the program. One student's son was killed, two others were homeless and there were even welfare recipients and victims of domestic vio-

lence occupying classroom seats.

"It has not been easy for many of them and they struggled to focus," she said. "That is what makes this school so unique. We recognize the challenges individuals might have in their lives, but offer them the support and encouragement they need to keep going. It is a great achievement for them to say they have finished the course, they have kept the faith."

The school started in 2002 with just 52 students, but its latest class that started in November 2009 boasts a total of 400, with the students being divided both into day and evening sessions.

Two sisters from Orange, Venise Joisil and Belaine Mirabeau, took longer than most to complete the program, having started back in 2005. Still, they could not be happier they finished.

"It was kind of tough. I would get out of school and go straight to work. I had to repeat some courses, but Belaine and I helped each other out and studied together," said Joisil, a 31-year-old mother

## Benevolence

"As often as we do good, we offer sacrifice to God."

**Aristotle**

"The conqueror is regarded with awe, the wise man commands our esteem, but it is the benevolent man who wins our affections."

**William Dean Howells**

"Carve your name on hearts, and not on marble."

**Charles H. Spurgeon**

"There cannot be a more glorious object in creation than a human being replete with benevolence, meditating in what manner he may render himself most acceptable to the Creator by doing good to his creatures."

**Henry Fielding**

Every fresh act of benevolence is the herald of deeper satisfaction; every charitable act a stepping-stone towards heaven.

**Henry Ward Beecher**

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## Keys To Empowerment



**Dr. Randal Pinkett - Scholar, Author, Entrepreneur  
Chairman and CEO, BCT Partners  
Author of No-Money Down CEO and Campus CEO**

New Community Corporation is helping Newark residents achieve self-sustaining financial independence through its involvement in the Newark Asset Building Coalition, a broad-based organization dedicated to financially empowering residents of New Jersey's largest city.

The 8th Annual Kickoff Breakfast of the Coalition, held at Newark's Metropolitan Baptist Church, drew a cross section of leaders from business, community, governmental and faith-based organizations. A major goal of the coalition is to increase the awareness of Newark residents when it comes to financial issues like the Earned Income Tax Credit, a refundable federal income tax credit for low to moderate income working individuals and families. It results in a tax refund to those who claim and qualify for the credit. The program is for those who earn less than \$49,000 a year or \$26 an hour.

"We have so many individuals and families who pass through our doors who qualify, but have never even heard of this tax credit," said Joann Williams-Swiney, director of NCC's Family Resource Center and a member of the coalition's executive board. "We want to empower them to take

advantage of it."

The coalition has established free tax preparation sites throughout the city, including NCC's Hispanic Development Corporation at 540 Orange Street.

Newark Mayor Cory Booker, who also spoke at the breakfast, praised the work of the coalition, saying it is all about empowering city residents to take advantage of financial opportunity.

"This coalition is a fundamental element of the overall success of our city," he said.

Randal Pinkett, the scholar, author and entrepreneur who gained notoriety by winning NBC's hit reality show, 'The Apprentice,' identified money, power and respect as the three keys to empowerment in his keynote address at the coalition-sponsored event.

Raised in a single parent household after his father passed away when he was only five, Pinkett said he learned early in life the value of saving and investing for the future. He warned against five financial mistakes - unwillingness to sacrifice, spending money frivolously, not having a financial plan, taking on too much debt and spending more than you earn.

Pinkett is the co-founder, Chairman and CEO of BCT Partners, a multimillion dollar management, technology and policy consulting firm in Newark.

"I wouldn't be where I am today were it not for someone stepping in to show me the value of building assets and building wealth," he said.



**Monsignor William J. Linder, founder and CEO of New Community Corporation, talks with Gloria McNeal, Professor of Nursing and Dean for Community/Clinical Affairs at UMDNJ-School of Nursing, after touring a mobile health van that services residents of Harmony House, NCC's transitional housing facility. Medical personnel from UMDNJ staff the van, which operates under the name 'New Jersey Children's Health Project', offering services such as childhood immunizations to youngsters residing at Harmony House.**



## More Families Turning To Harmony House



New Community's Harmony House transitional living facility is becoming even more of a safety net to families in the midst of this economic recession.

Adam and Tia Natal, and their two sons, Gerald, 2, and Benjamin, 1, were evicted last fall from their Newark apartment after Adam lost his job with a rug-cleaning company. They moved into Harmony House in October and were pleasantly surprised to find it was not like the "shelter" they envisioned.

"All I was expecting was a big room with a bunch of beds and no place to put our stuff," said Tia Natal. "This was very clean and had a family atmosphere."

With its 102 individual apartment units, Harmony House offered the family a temporary apartment, as well as a secured, fenced, playground for their children. There is also 24-hour security and a host of support services, ranging from on-site day care, counseling and referrals to job training programs within the NCC network.

Now in its 20th year, the goal of Harmony House is to give families the tools they need to once again become self-sufficient.

"Harmony House has become the foundation for the steps we need to build," said Adam Natal. "We have the tools and just need to put in the labor."

Adam Natal is now enrolled in New Community's Youth and Adult Automotive Training Center, while his wife is being trained as a cashier in New Community's ShopRite Training Program.

Harmony House also has a separate program for pregnant teens and young mothers who are already parenting. New Community is currently making plans to house this population in a separate, stand-alone facility.

"The need is great. From families who are having a tough time making ends meet to teen moms in need of direction and support, Harmony House expects to see even more of a demand for services in 2010," said Diane Young, administrator of Harmony House.

## Seniors Learning Computer Basics



Joann Williams-Swiney, standing to left, director of the NCC Family Resource Center, helps a student in the senior computer class co-sponsored by New Community Corporation, The Salvation Army and the Urban League of Essex County. A total of 20 students are enrolled in the fall session of the class, called Elders of the 21st Century. During the eight-week class held at NCC's Workforce Development Center, students learn the basics of Microsoft Word and use of the Internet. The program, launched last summer, is taught by an instructor from The Salvation Army.



## Arti Kakkar



It was while working in the slums of India that Arti Kakkar developed a true compassion for people. The daughter of professionals—both her parents are medical doctors—Arti's undergraduate study in India was in the field of child development.

"I used to work with women in the slums and their children," she recalled. "I would go into their homes and see how they live. I saw the resilience of people and really learned a lot. It was an eye-opening experience."

Arti, who came to New Jersey from her native New Delhi in 1997, is now the director of clinical services for New

Community Corporation's Family Service Bureau (FSB). She has been with FSB since 2003, when she started as a crisis counselor for survivors of the 9/11 tragedy.

"We were reaching out to whomever was affected—children, teachers and parents—getting them to recognize the signs of stress and post traumatic stress disorder," she said.

From 2003 to 2005 while enrolled in a graduate program at Seton Hall University in marriage and family therapy, Arti worked as an intern at FSB. To help pay her way through school, she worked as a computer consultant. She

was hired for a permanent position at FSB in 2005, having earned the title of licensed marriage and family therapist.

"I always wanted to work in the field of mental health," she said. "You feel that you are making a difference in people's lives."

One of her first endeavors at FSB was developing a program, called Beyond Survival, to provide counseling to female trauma victims, such as women impacted by domestic violence and sexual abuse. Arti was able to secure funding for the three-year pilot program which saw her working with families, including those under the scrutiny of the state Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). She also worked with families from New Community's transitional housing facility, called Harmony House.

In her current job, Arti also provides on-site supervision at FSB for interns who are studying to be licensed family therapists at Seton Hall University. FSB hosts anywhere from 15 to 18 graduate students a year, giving them hands-on experience in the field.

"Helping students learn is very fulfilling," she said. "You give them educational training, provide them with the rules and laws and show them different ways of doing things."

Arti is married and the mother of a 15-month old daughter. New Community is proud to have her as part of the team at Family Service Bureau.

## New Community's LPN School

Story continued from page 1

with three young children who now works as a home health aide making \$10 an hour.

She and many of the other graduates currently working as home health aides

or certified nursing assistants stand to double their salaries after they pass their state boards and officially become licensed practical nurses. There is also still a nursing shortage, which is good news for these graduates.

"If you look around, nursing is one of the few professions where opportunities are growing," said Monsignor William J. Linder, founder and CEO of New Community Corporation. "We need to look to the future of our community and give everyone educational opportunities."

## OUR MISSION

To help residents of inner cities improve the quality of their lives to reflect individual, God-given dignity and personal achievement.